

REMARKS

Examiner's Interview

Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the courtesy of the call received February 5, 2009. During the call, the Examiner indicated that dependent claims 3 and 13 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The Examiner further suggested that by amending claims 1 and 7 with the limitations of claims 3 and 13 (and any intervening claims), respectively, then claims 1, 2, 4-8, 10, and 14-17 would be allowable. The Examiner noted that claim 18 had no allowable dependent claims, but that by amending claim 18 to include the limitations of either claim 3 or 13 (and any intervening claims), claims 18-20 would be allowable. In addition, the Examiner noted minor informalities with respect to the language of claims 4 and 17-20.

Status of the Application

Claims 1-8 and 10-20 are pending in the application. The status of the claims is as follows:

Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of allowable claim 3, as suggested by the Examiner. Applicants therefore believe that claims 1, 2, and 4-6 are allowable.

Claim 7 has been amended to include the limitations of allowable claim 13 (and all intervening claims), as suggested by the Examiner. Applicants therefore believe that claims 7, 8, 10, and 14-17 are allowable.

Claim 18 has been amended to include the limitations of allowable claim 13 (and all intervening claims), as suggested by the Examiner. Applicants therefore believe that claims 18-20 are allowable.

Claims 4 and 17-20 have been amended to correct the minor informalities noted by the Examiner. These changes are not necessitated by the prior art, are unrelated to the patentability of the invention over the prior art, and do not introduce any new matter.

Claims 3 and 11-13 are canceled.

CONCLUSION

Wherefore, in view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, this application is considered to be in condition for allowance, and an early reconsideration and a Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

This Preliminary Amendment does not increase the number of independent claims, does not increase the total number of claims, and does not present any multiple dependency claims. Accordingly, no fee based on the number or type of claims is currently due. However, if a fee, other than the issue fee, is due, please charge this fee to Sidley Austin LLP Deposit Account No. 18-1260.

If an extension of time is required to enable this document to be timely filed and there is no separate Petition for Extension of Time filed herewith, this document is to be construed as also constituting a Petition for Extension of Time Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) for a period of time sufficient to enable this document to be timely filed.

Any other fee required for such Petition for Extension of Time and any other fee required by this document pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 and 1.17, other than the issue fee,

Application No. 10/773,882
Preliminary Amendment dated February 13, 2009
Reply to Examiner's Interview of February 5, 2009

and not submitted herewith should be charged to Sidley Austin LLP Deposit Account No. 18-1260. Any refund should be credited to the same account.

Respectfully submitted,

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